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PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
MEETING

HELD AT THE
THEATRE IN CALCUTTA,
on the 25th of JULY, 1785,

To take into Consideration "An Act for the better Regulation of the Affairs of the East-India Company, and of the British Dominions in India," &c.

TOGETHER WITH
The RESOLUTIONS of the said Meeting,
AND THE SPEECHES OF
MESSRS. DALLAS AND PURLING.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED,
The RESOLUTIONS agreed on by the OFFICERS of the
THIRD BRIGADE, stationed at Cawnpore.

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THE WHOLE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

METROPOLITAN

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*At a MEETING of the BRITISH INHABITANTS,
held at the THEATRE in CALCUTTA, on the
25th of JULY, 1785.*

PHILIP YOUNG, Esq. the SHERIFF,

Opened the Business of the Day in the following Address:

GENTLEMEN,

THIS Meeting has been convened by me at the Request of the very respectable Body of Gentlemen who composed the last Grand Jury, contained in the following Letter:

To PHILIP YOUNG, Esq.

Sheriff of the Town of Calcutta.

S I R,

BY desire of the Grand Jury, I am to request you will be pleased to convene a meeting of the British inhabitants of Calcutta, at the Old Court House, or any other convenient place, on Monday the 25th of July next, to take into consideration the propriety and necessity of a

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Petition

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Petition on certain parts of the Act of the 24th of his Majesty, entitled, " An Act for the better Regulation of " the Affairs of the East India Company, and of the British Possessions in India, and for establishing a Court of " Judicature for the more speedy and effectual Trial of " Persons accused of Offences committed in the East- " Indies."

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient and

most humble Servant,

Grand Jury Room,

C. PURLING, Foreman.

Calcutta, June 13, 1785.

Feeling, Gentlemen, the necessity of a public appeal, I most cheerfully complied with the request of the Grand Jury, and I am sure, their wishes must be fully gratified at seeing so large and respectable a number of their fellow citizens attend their call, and I have no doubt, Gentlemen, but your resolutions this day, by their moderation and firmness, will do honour to them and to yourselves.

Charles Purling, Esq. was then unanimously called to the Chair, when he addressed the Meeting in the following speech :

PERMIT

Mr. PURLING's SPEECH.

PERMIT me, Gentlemen, to return you my unfeigned thanks for the honour you have conferred upon me. The more unsought the distinction, the more I am impressed with the obligation to exert my poor share of abilities for the general good, in the pursuit of which, I am persuaded, I shall have the ready support, concurrence, and approbation of every one who styles himself an Englishman.

The numerous assembly of respectable characters, whom I observe, assure me, they are well apprized that no trivial matter has now called us together.

It may, however, be expected, that the individual of this society, who has stood forward to convene a Meeting for the consideration of a solemn appeal to our sovereign, or the legislature of our country, may be induced to open the subject generally to them. Any less important occasion could not have impelled me to have undertaken a task, to which I feel myself so very unequal; and if I sue for favour, gentlemen, it is not from an apprehension of not obtaining it from your liberality, but because I fear there will be but too much room for indulgence.

The mode adopted for convening the British Inhabitants of Calcutta was esteemed the most constitutional, and therefore the most advisable. The subject of our intended deliberation was declared to be the propriety and necessity of a petition against certain parts of the

late Act of Parliament, for the better regulation and management of the East India Company's Affairs.

The introduction of a tribunal of justice, solely for the trial of Indians, the deprivation of that invaluable, that blessed birth-right, the judgment of our Peers, and the several provisions which form a system of judicature totally different from that by which the whole empire is governed, are a novelty in our constitution, an evil to the nation at large, and a grievance, disgrace, and indignity to Indians in particular, whose reputations have received a death-stroke, which no human exertion can remedy, recall, or obliterate ; however, the repeal of this offensive, this criminating act, may avert the injuries which impend on our fortunes and our families.

By the passing of this Act, we stand prejudged, in as much as it sets forth, that the detection and punishment of crimes committed in India requires different laws, and severer than those which already operate over the whole body of British subjects. This presumption criminales, because it distinguishes. We all know, that the law supposes crimes ; but we also know, that it does not attach crimes to particular men, or particular bodies of men.

This law provides penalties and pains hitherto unknown and (I scarce think any one will say nay, when I add) unproportioned to the offences they are intended to check and punish.

It establishes an extraordinary and an alarming innovation in the constitution of our country, which the supporter of the bill was bold enough to avow, and the representatives of a free people were supine enough to admit.

It

It deprives the British born subject, who has resided a few years in India, of the rights and privileges enjoyed by the rest of his countrymen.

It exposes him to the malevolence of any man, whom he may accidentally offend, during the three years of probation, or may have offended before he left India.

It renders him a marked and branded being among those with whom he is obliged to associate, on his return to his native country.

It erects a partial, unjust, and odious distinction between the King's and the Company's Servants, though both are employed in India, and equally liable to the same frailties and temptations.

It involves the innocent with the guilty in one common destruction : nay,

It spreads, in its contagious blast, ruin to the infant and the unborn.

Prejudice and crimination are stamped on its forehead. The very approach of the monster, its ghastly and horrible appearance, without waiting for its destructive effects, urges our resort to the first principle of nature, self preservation; and every manly, resolute, deliberate, and legal opposition, which it is in our power at this distance to exert for its extirpation, is loudly called forth.

The delusion, malevolence, and prejudice of the times, and the ready attention paid to all tales in crimination of Indians, seem to have been our bane and misfortune.

The story of Almas Ally Khawn brings but too serious reflections to my mind, however it may have
excited

excited the gibe and the joke in the metropolis of our country. It has served to convince me, that even improbable stories have been greedily caught at, and have added to the mischief, which misrepresentation and a total exaggeration of facts had originated. But allowing even that Almas Ally Khawn had met with a merited punishment from his sovereign, for default of revenue, treason, and rebellion; and a husband and a father had been cut off from an unfortunate family, still we find that his estates were said to be untouched. That family therefore, whose pathetic complaints have been exhibited in our newspapers, would have been left in a far more eligible condition, than our wives and children will be, when any of us, under the restrictions now prescribed, and for an act, which never was a crime till this law made it so, shall, after furnishing suspicion against himself, and answering interrogatories upon oath, be shut up in prison, have his whole fortune and property attached, perhaps confiscated: be subject to a tedious process to extend the imprisonment and seizure to years, and entirely uncertain that they will not last for ever. Deprived of their prop and support, and spoiled of the just expectations, which the law of reason and humanity has decreed to the weaker and more helpless part of the creation, and has rendered the natural and inherent right of the offspring of all mankind, and of our offspring, till the passing of this bill, our families must either turn themselves for a hard earned subsistence to menial employs, which our situations in life would have protected them from, had we never visited these climes; or be reduced to a state still more humiliating, of pinching, but silent penury.

nury and want, poverty stricken with shame, and shrinking from the eye of the world.

In short, the virulence, cruelty, and persecution, with which Indians are from henceforward to be pursued, and at the very period in which laws have been made to check speculation, and to curb oppression, extortion, and injustice, will far surpass what has even been suspected of them, however far suspicion may have gone — and will even exceed the severity, if it had been inflicted by the advice of an English Gentleman, on Almas Ally Khawn.

I cannot urge more, Gentlemen, than that our liberties as British subjects, perhaps the present form of our admired and excellent constitution, our fortunes as individuals, our happiness as husbands and parents, the future maintenance of our wives and children, and the dependance of those who have not yet seen the light, are all involved in a proper and spirited exertion for the repeal of this ill-advised, this ill-omened Act.

None more powerful motives, no objects of greater importance can exist to induce unanimity: and I sanguinely hope, that a diversity of opinion will not prevail to obstruct our honest, temperate, and lawful endeavours, for the accomplishment of so desirable an end.

As soon as the different Gentlemen who had delivered their Sentiments on the Business of the Day had done, Mr. PURLING rose and moved the following RESOLUTIONS, which were unanimously agreed to:

I. **R**ESOLVED, That his Majesty's Subjects in the East Indies are intitled to the Protection and Support of the Laws of England, in common with the other Subjects of the Realm.

II. *Resolved*, That so much of the Act of the 24th of his present Majesty, Chapter xxv. entitled "An Act for the better Regulation and Management of the Affairs of the East India Company, and of the British Possessions in India, and for establishing a Court of Judicature for the more speedy and effectual Trial of Persons accused of Offences committed in the East Indies," as compels the Servants of the East India Company, upon their Return to Great Britain, to deliver in upon Oath, an Inventory of their whole Property, under penalties of excessive Severity, is grievous and oppressive to the Servants of the said Company, and repugnant to the Constitution of our Country.

III. *Resolved*, That the Erection of a new Tribunal by the said Act, for the special Purpose of trying Offences, charged to have been committed in the East Indies; a Tribunal unrestrained by the settled Rules of Law, and
subject

subject to no Appeal, and the depriving them of their undoubted Birth Right, the Trial by Jury, are Violations of the Great Charter of our Liberties, and Infringements of the most sacred Principles of the British Constitution.

IV. *Resolved*, That the said Act, by exposing of his Majesty's Subjects, residing under this Presidency, to be sent forcibly to England, and there to be tried for Offences committed, or charged to be committed, by them within these Provinces, is highly dangerous to the Security of their Persons and Fortunes.

V. *Resolved*, That it is injurious to the Servants of the United Company to be subjected by the said Act of Parliament to be dismissed from their Employments in the East Indies, or to be recalled at the Pleasure of the Crown, which is, in other words, at the Will of the Minister.

VI. *Resolved*, That the Provision of the said Act of Parliament, which enacts, that all Writings, which shall have been transmitted from the East Indies to the Court of Directors, by their Officers or Servants resident in the East Indies, in the usual Course of their Correspondence with the said Court of Directors, may be admitted by the Commissioners to be offered in Evidence, and shall not be deemed inadmissible, or incompetent, is subversive of the established Rules of Evidence, and manifestly dangerous to his Majesty's Subjects returning from this Country to Great Britain.

VII. *Resolved*, That it is therefore becoming, and highly expedient for his Majesty's Subjects in these Provinces to endeavour, by all legal and constitutional Means, to obtain a Repeal of such Clauses in the said Act

of Parliament, as impose these and other Hardships upon them. And that, for the Purpose of obtaining such Repeal, Petitions humbly laying our Grievances before his Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament, are adviseable, necessary, and proper

VIII. *Resolved*, That a Committee of fifteen Gentlemen, selected from the Inhabitants of Calcutta, be appointed to prepare Petitions to his Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament, and to correspond with the Inland Stations subordinate to this Government, and with the other Presidencies in India. And that it be recommended to them to take all such Measures as they shall judge necessary for transmitting the said Petitions to Europe, and for promoting and obtaining an effectual Redress to his Majesty's Subjects in India. And that the said Committee be empowered to fill up Vacancies, as they may happen in the Course of Time.

IX. *Resolved*, That as considerable Expence must be unavoidably incurred by our Endeavours to obtain Redress of our Grievances, a Subscription shall be opened by the Committee, who shall be elected by this Assembly, and that, as soon as the Petition shall be ready for Signature, a Book shall be produced for the said Subscription, to the end that every Man may have the Opportunity of promoting, by a voluntary Sacrifice of a small Share of his Property, that Security of the Whole which is the grand Object of our Petitions.

X. *Resolved*, That all Subscriptions be received, whether in Specie or in Paper, and that the Amount subscribed, shall be paid by each Subscriber to such Person

Person or Persons as the said Committee, when elected, shall appoint to receive the same.

XI. *Resolved*, That this Assembly do authorize the said Committee to dispose of and expend the Whole, or any Part of the Sums of Money so paid, in such Manner as shall appear to them best calculated for the general Benefit of the Cause for which they were subscribed.

XII. *Resolved*, That Mr. Charles Purling be a Member of the Committee, and that he be requested to propose fourteen other Gentlemen to the Meeting for their Approval.

XIII. *Resolved*, That the following Gentlemen are elected for the Purposes mentioned in the foregoing Resolutions, viz.

<i>Patrick Duff,</i>	<i>T. H. Davies,</i>
<i>Charles Purling,</i>	<i>J. Evelyn,</i>
<i>Peter Murray,</i>	<i>J. Church,</i>
<i>H. Vansittart,</i>	<i>Herbert Lloyd,</i>
<i>Wm. Cowper,</i>	<i>George Dallas,</i>
<i>Wm. Scott,</i>	<i>John Bristow,</i>
<i>John Duncan,</i>	<i>Phi. Young, Esqs.</i>
<i>John Murray,</i>	

XV. *Resolved*, That this Assembly of the British Inhabitants of Calcutta, having the most perfect Confidence and Trust in the Uprightness, Integrity, and Abilities of the Committee chosen for the Conduct and Management of their Interest, and for the Protection and Defence of their Rights as Subjects of Great Britain, do, in order to give Vigour and Efficacy to their Acts, and to free them

them from future Trouble, Embarrassment, and Obstruction, delegate to them full Authority; and do express a plenary Reliance on them for the Exercise of it, and do pledge to them the Concurrence and Support of the said Assembly, in the fullest Manner possible, to all Measures they shall legally adopt, for obtaining a Repeal of the oppressive Parts of the aforesaid Act of Parliament.

XV. *Resolved*, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Grand Jury, for having convened a legal and constitutional Meeting of the British Subjects in this Settlement, for the purpose of petitioning his Majesty, and the two Houses of Parliament for Redress of those heavy Grievances, imposed on them by the before-mentioned Act of the Legislature.

XVI. *Resolved*, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Philip Yonge, Esq. the High Sheriff, for his patriotic Conduct in calling the Assembly at the Request of the Grand Jury.

XVII. *Resolved*, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Charles Purling, Esq. for the great Precision, Candour, and Regularity, with which he has conducted the Business of the Day.

XVIII. *Resolved*, That the above Resolutions be printed and made public.

RESOLUTIONS framed on the 13th, and agreed to on
the 17th of March, 1785, by the OFFICERS of
the THIRD BRIGADE stationed at CAWNPOR.

THE general Voice of the Gentlemen at this Station, taking into Consideration the most proper Mode of obtaining a Repeal of the Clausēs of Mr. Pitt's India Bill, which, under the unjust illiberal Plea of Delinquency on our Parts, constitute the New Court of Judicature,

The following Heads are recommended to the Perusal of the Gentlemen at large, and if approved of, their Signatures are requested.

I. THAT as Britons we are intitled to the Protection and Support of the antient and established Laws of England, in common with the other Subjects of the Realm.

II. THAT the Inventory required from the Servants of the Honourable East India Company, and the New Court of Judicature constituted by Mr. Pitt's Bill for the Trial of Delinquents, are contrary to the Laws and Customs of England, in so much that it compels, under very severe Penalties, Men born free to give Evidence against themselves, and deprives the Subject of the inestimable

timable Blessing and his Birth Right, "*Trial by his Peers.*"

III. THAT it is the Duty of every Subject to support the Laws, and by every legal and honest Endeavour to prevent Innovations in the Constitution.

IV. THAT we do most Solemnly believe the New Court of Judicature constituted by Mr. Pitt's Bill to be contrary to the Constitution.

WE further Resolve, that so soon as the several Opinions of the Gentlemen at this Station be obtained, we will elect by Ballot a Committee to correspond with the other Committees at the several Stations, and aid and assist their good Endeavours.

RESOLVED likewise, That when called upon, we will cheerfully Subscribe what proportionable Sums of Money may be requisite in Support of this our just Cause.

N. B. The above Resolutions were subscribed by the Gentlemen present at this Meeting, and afterwards, by circulation, and at the subsequent Meeting on the 17th of March, 1785, by about one hundred and fifty.

It was also agreed at this meeting, that a general Meeting of those gentlemen who may be willing to sign the accompanying Resolutions be requested, on Thursday next the 17th instant, at Alcock's Tope, to ballot for a Committee to conduct the business.

The mode of ballot proposed is, that each subscriber shall bring or send a list of twenty names, and, from a majority of votes thus given, thirteen or more gentlemen may be returned as a Committee.

SPEECH

S P E E C H

DELIVERED BY

Mr. G. DALLAS.

GENTLEMEN,

CONSCIOUS as I feel myself of my own want of importance, unpractised as I am in the arts of public elocution, and surrounded by several whose superior powers might well discourage the temerity of thus challenging your attention, it is not to be wondered at, that I should feel myself considerably affected in attempting to address so numerous and respectable a society, and that the agitation inseparable from the novelty of my situation, should deprive me of that calmness and recollection I could wish to preserve upon so momentous and interesting an occasion.

Assembled as we now are to deliberate upon measures of the utmost consequence to the future interests of this society, the moment is an awful one, and the call is equally solemn! the eye of the nation will be
upon

upon us, and possibly the leaders in this day's debate may have courted a perilous pre-eminence, but I shall never decline the hazard, where the approbation of my own heart, and the applause of the good and wise, may follow the attempt. I am sensible that many adverting to my youth, and to the superiority of their own claims to the honour I have thus presumptuously assumed, will arraign the propriety of my rushing into public notice, and pressing forward to distinguish myself by an animadversion upon the measures of government at home. In my own conscious humility of talent and situation, I anticipate, in some measure, the aptitude of their observations; but from your candour and indulgence, I also derive a confidence which emboldens me to proceed: for there are, Gentlemen, certain occasions when the meanest individual may feel his indignation awakened, and spirited by a sense of public wrongs, may boldly step forth in the hope of being serviceable to the community, by sedulously labouring to promote their redress. This I humbly apprehend to be one of those, and stimulated by this persuasion I will venture to expose myself to all the severity of remark; if, in the course of our present deliberations, I should be flattered by your attention, and honored with your support, I shall then, for the moment, rise in my own estimation, and, protected by your approbation, feel myself shielded from the acrimony of attack.

The importance of the subject on which I am now presuming to address you, a subject which most nearly interests both your honour and your fortunes, does in itself preclude the necessity of further apology on my
part,

part, a consideration which I am confident will find its excuse in every impartial breast, dictated as it is by a warm concern for the preservation of our characters, as men, of our constitutional and unalienable rights, as Britons.

It is not, I apprehend, necessary to inform any gentleman present, that by the Act of Parliament lately arrived in this settlement, and passed in the twenty-fourth year of his present Majesty's reign, entitled "An Act for the better Regulation and Management of the Affairs of the East India Company, and of the British Possessions in India, and for establishing a Court of Justice for the more speedy and effectual Trial of Persons accused of Offences committed in the East Indies," a new and unheard of judicature has been established in England; a judicature as arbitrary in its powers, as it is illegal in its original principles; tending to deprive us of that inestimable blessing, the glory of our constitution, the right of trial by a Jury of our Peers. A judicature which daringly violates our great charter, the palladium of our liberties, and seems designed to extend the iron hand of oppression over those chiefly who may be so unfortunate as to fall under the stigma of having served the East India Company.

This act so generally known by the name of *Mr. Pitt's bill*, and which has excited such universal discontent throughout our settlements in India, is one of those bold attempts to violate the purity of our constitution, which have been too often made during the late unhappy fluctuation in our Councils: it is true, necessity, the plea of tyrants to palliate every enormity, has been

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urged in vindication of its birth, but have the united efforts of falshood, prejudice, and faction, (and they have all been exerted) been able to establish its existence to the conviction of one reasonable or impartial mind? I reply they have not! In proportion then, as the innovation was glaring and injurious, that necessity, which alone could vindicate the principle of this act, should have been clear and apparent; and none but the most urgent and self-displayed should have authorized so open a violation of our ancient jurisprudence, or warranted so odious and humiliating a distinction between ourselves and the rest of our fellow-subjects on that island, from whence this oppressive act dates its existence. It is by encroachments like these that our constitution will be ultimately undermined, and that, in losing the dignified title of freemen, we shall cease to be considered as a great and respectable people, and forfeit the envy of surrounding nations.

Were the minister to say to me—Sir, what are your objections to my Bill? I would tell him, Sir, I object to it upon solid and unanswerable grounds—I would tell him, that it is ill-fitted to remedy the evil it is designed to irradicate; that the violence of its principle must destroy the effect that it was intended to produce, and that in alienating our affections from the parent state, it must ultimately endanger the security of the British possessions in the East—I would tell him, that it wantonly deprives us of those rights inherent in us as subjects of the British empire; and that no class of men should be disfranchised of their privileges, without an adequate proof being exhibited of their delinquency

quency to sanctify so painful a proscription—I would tell him, that such is the opinion of one of the brightest characters that illumines the present age; I mean the *Earl of Mansfield*, whose superior wisdom all admire, and whose extensive knowledge all respect. This venerable and enlightened sage, in arguing against the *Cricklade Bill*, in the House of Lords, on the 13th of May, 1782, (which had for its object to deprive the electors of their privileges) armed with the powers of eloquence and truth, particularly said, “That the House were not competent to punish a community indiscriminately, without evidence being produced at their bar amounting to a conviction of guilt—That supposition was an illegal plea to warrant the infliction of pain and penalties.” *Lord Thurlow*, as celebrated for his wisdom as for the unvaried manliness of his conduct, was also of a similar opinion, and forcibly cautioned the house against “violating rights made venerable by time, and sanctified by the approbation of our ancestors.” With authorities like these to produce, I would tell him, I hesitate not to combat the principle of his bill, in all its parts, and to exclaim against the tyranny of its intent! I would tell him, in opposition to it we have many acts of the legislature to produce, which have ever been held sacred untill now, and which our ancestors wisely designed as a fence against the predatory inroads of unrestrained ambition, or the lawless invasions of unbridled power. First—*The Constitutions of Clarendon*, in the time of *Henry the Second*. Secondly—*Magna Charta*, in the reign of *King John*. Thirdly—*The Petition of Rights*, in the reign of *Charles the First*, And

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lastly---

lastly—*The Bill of Rights*, upon the accession of *William and Mary*. With respect to *Magna Charta*, (that noble pillar of our freedom) it was confirmed thirty several times, by the three estates, and even secured by a law, (the *Forty-fourth* of *Edward the Third*) which positively declared, “That no Statute which should be afterwards enacted in contradiction to any article of that Charter, should ever have any force or validity:” And is not this act enacted in opposition to that law, and in violation of that Charter? And should it then possess force or validity? Where is the necessity of making laws, if they are to be trampled upon by the very people whom the nation delegates to frame them? That law has never been repealed! If then it is now to be considered as an unrevoked deed of the state, am I not warranted in saying, that even the law of the land authorizes us to reprobate the provisions of this act, which unconstitutionally and illegally trench upon our honour, and our fortunes; for that law must be first repealed, before this act can be justly said to possess that constitutional legality which should bind us to yield it obedience! In the Bill of Rights delivered by the Lords and Commons, on the 16th of February, 1689, to the Prince and Princess of Orange, are these memorable words: “And they do claim, demand, and insist upon all and singular the premises, as their undoubted rights and liberties.” And the Act of Parliament itself (1. W. & M. ft. 2. c. 2.) specially recognizes, “All and singular the rights and liberties, asserted and claimed, in the said declaration, to be the free, ancient, and indubitable rights of the people of this kingdom.”

"kingdom." And are we not subjects of that kingdom? Are we not, by this act, deprived of those rights? Are we not cut off from the enjoyment of those privileges, which at the period of that glorious revolution were designed to be a national blessing for us all? I therefore call this statute, an act of power against the ancient law of the land; violent in its operation; illegal in its principle; and calculated to brand, and irritate, by adding insult to injury, and gilding oppression with the forms of justice.

Such, Gentlemen, are my objections to the general principle of this act. Many others, of equal force, will doubtless occur to your own imaginations. I will now proceed to urge a few others, which more immediately affect your private interests, by pointing out such parts of the Act as appear to me particularly hostile to them.

By the 55th Clause of this Act, the all the Company's Servants are required, within two months after their arrival in England, to deliver in, to certain officers of Government, inventories of their whole, real, and personal estates. Having so done, by the 61st Clause, incitements, and rewards to a capital amount, are liberally held forth to all informers; and, as if this benign mode of collecting evidence against these oriental plunderers, these prejudged delinquents, were not sufficient to facilitate its acquisition, by the 75th Clause, the father, the brother, the son, the bosom friend, is to be compelled, by the terror of heavy penalties, to violate the ties of friendship, and to turn the accuser of those with whom

he may stand connected in the dearest and most confidential relations of life.

By the 56th Clause—For the space of three years after his return to his native land, the devoted East-Indian is to stand in a predicament unheard of in our history, and hitherto unexperienced by any British subject, holding his estate almost at the mercy of the Minister, to whom, if he is obnoxious by any parliamentary opposition, a door is opened for bending the laws to the purposes of private vengeance.

If during that space of time any accusations are lodged against him, he becomes subjected to all the miseries of imprisonment, during which he is to be excluded from the use of his estate, and after all, by the 66th Clause, he is to submit his honour and his fortune to the award of a tribunal not casually nominated from among his countrymen in general, but selected from a particular description of men, consisting of a mixture of Officers of the Crown, and hereditary Nobles, and Members of the House of Commons, with this invidious exception, in the 70th Clause, that no person who has served the Company can be a Member thereof; although from that circumstance alone he might reasonably be supposed, (where equality of ability prevailed,) to be in possession of superior qualifications to entitle him to this proof of confidence from his country. Neither, in the course of the prosecution, is this tribunal confined to those modes of proceeding which are customary in all other cases of criminal jurisdiction. It is not to the respectability of its members we object, the most prejudiced must admit the probability that a superior rectitude

rectitude of conduct, and generosity of principle, will influence their proceedings; because justice and liberality are the attributes of minds enlightened by science, and enlarged by education.

It is the institution itself, and the authority it assumes, which we reprobate, as opposite to the genius of the constitution, and calculated to destroy the beauty of its fabric. Every innovation upon its foundation is dangerous, and should be guardedly watched; for let it be remembered, with exulting pride, that the Constitution of Great Britain is a blessing not common to all, but peculiarly intailed upon the posterity of Englishmen; which they are bound, by every obligation binding upon society, to transmit to their descendants in the same pure and inviolate manner in which it was bequeathed to them by their ancestors; many of whom bled and died to permatate its superstructure, and to give it a stability beyond the accidents of time.

That guarded care with which our excellent laws protect the life and property of the meanest subject, has provided, with respect to even the most notorious criminal, that he shall be tried upon the oath of his accuser delivered face to face in an open court, so as to afford him every fair opportunity to invalidate his testimony. This has for ages been established as a fundamental maxim in our jurisprudence; but here, by the 80th Clause, "All writings which shall have been transmitted from the East Indies to the Court of Directors of the said United Company, by their Officers or Servants resident in the East Indies, may be admitted to be offered in evidence." so that the persecuted prisoner having no opportunity of seeing, or cross examining

ing his accuser, is placed in the same predicament with the unhappy criminal, who stands before the secret tribunal at Venice, or the Bench of the Holy Office at Lisbon; and this is particularly alarming, from the known and proverbial indifference with which the natives of this country will consent to perjure themselves, if they can, by this means, gratify resentment, acquire patronage, or obtain pecuniary advantage.

I know it will be asserted that the guilty alone will have any cause to dread the exercise of this new judicial authority, but let no man suppose that the purest innocence will avail (as the matter at present stands) to protect him from incurring all the penalties of the blackest guilt. At any period within the allotted space of time after the return of the Company's Servant to Europe, should the most profligate and abandoned villain, with a view to the gratification of malice or the fruition of reward, think proper to prefer an accusation against him, it rests at the arbitrary option of the Court of Exchequer to imprison his person, and to place the whole of his fortune in a state of temporary sequestration; and in this situation he is to remain, if they deem it expedient, until such evidence may be procured from India as may be sufficient either to acquit him, or to substantiate the charge. By the 57th Clause, he is disabled from alleviating his miseries by an enlargement upon bail, as in all other cases, (I believe) except those of felony, or treason. The act, though it cherishes perfidy, affords no redress against false information. No specific time is limited, as in the cases of general jail delivery, for the virtual acquittal of the accused for want of evidence :
and

and the charge once made, and admitted by the Court of Exchequer, he may continue to languish for years within his dungeon, torn from his family, doomed in lonely anguish to breathe a wretched existence—all the blossoms of his hope blighted, all the happiness of his life obstructed and destroyed !

The principles upon which this jurisdiction is established are equally illegal and absurd, and in many points directly contradictory to the spirit of those laws which form the bulwark of our freedom.

In every other instance, innocence is supposed until conviction; but here, the idea is totally reversed, and assumed guilt precedes accusation.

In every other instance, the highest authority in the state dare not attempt forcibly, or unfairly, to procure evidence against a suspected person; but here, before there is even room for suspicion, we are compelled to furnish matter for prosecution against ourselves.

Even in cases of notorious criminality, the culprit who is arraigned at the bar of his country, so far from being necessitated to answer interrogatories tending to criminate himself, (as this act binds us to do) is particularly cautioned to avoid a confession of his guilt; and should he plead guilty when put upon his defence, his Judges are the first to advise him to retract his declaration. An avowal of culpability thus obtained can only be compared to a confession wrung by the force of torture. Indeed the latter mode would leave the accused an option of preserving his property for the benefit of his family, by a patient submission to the agony of pain; whereas the former, by an awful appeal to his

conscience, and the irresistible force of a religious obligation, compels him to be the unhappy instrument of his own destruction. This argument, I admit, will only apply to the situation of the guilty, but even criminals have rights which equity and humanity respect.

How different the sentiments of a Committee of the British Senate once were, I will now proceed to shew.

In the year 1781, Commissioners were appointed by Parliament to examine, take, and state, the public accounts of the kingdom. In the month of June 1782, they delivered in their first report; in which (after forcibly stating the difficulties to which they are exposed in the pursuit of evidence to compleat their investigation) they say, "by what means then are we to detect (if such "there have been) peculation, fraud, or misapplication? "for we admit no charge against persons abroad, who "have no opportunity of being heard in their own defence, and we are cautious that our examination does not "lead to self-accusation."

These were the manly, generous effusions of liberal minds, who scorned to bend to persecution, or even to detect misconduct by the perpetration of injustice. But what was the language of the Honourable framer of this act himself, when a Minister of unprecedented talents fell from his office in the attempt to introduce another of a tendency less injurious to the rights of individuals, and the interests of society? he said "Let the Hon. "Gentleman beware, that in attempting to protect the "natives of India in their rights, he does not violate those "of his countrymen." How forcibly do these words, recoil upon himself, how immediately do they apply to
his

his own act, which not merely violates, but directly destroys those rights! In these times a consistency of conduct, in political life, is a phenomenon rarely to be met with. Men's opinions are too apt to veer upon the triumphs of Party, or the disappointments of aspiring expectation; and those Spartan sentiments which delude the unsuspecting, and favour the purposes of the day in the career to station, too often vanish from the Statesman's mind in the hour of successful ambition. He then discerns the difference between the theory and the practice of power, and dazzled by the charms of his situation, exultingly vindicates the apostacy of his principles, by exclaiming to his opponents—*Non sum qualis eram!* "*Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.*"

But if any farther authority were necessary in proof of the illegality of this act, I need only refer you to the protest of the dissenting Lords, for a full exposition of its fatal aim. A protest which does honour to their feelings as men, adds lustre to their characters as senators, and registers them upon the the records of their country, the illustrious guardians of liberty, and the generous protectors of the oppressed.

To concentrate therefore all the injurious tendencies of this arbitrary act:

This novel act deprives us of our right of trial by a constitutional jury.

This novel act deprives us of our participation in the inestimable act of Habeas Corpus.

This novel act deprives us of our option, and compels us to appear as evidence against our dearest friends. It therefore loosens the bonds of society, extinguishes the

first affections of the heart, and tends to convert the nearest relations of life to snares of dishonour and destruction.

This novel act is stained with illiberality, and pregnant with despotism. It taints the essence of the constitution; it poisons the source of freedom; it destroys the foundation of those liberties, which are at once the pride and glory of our country.

And finally, it introduces an idea, which even the Minister, in the plenitude of his power and the precipitation of his projects, hath not dared to avow---that by entering into the service of the East India Company, we have relinquished all our most valuable privileges as Members of the British Empire.

In these are grievances; it is sufficient to state the fact; it is impossible to err in the comment---that they demand redress: for certainly this nefarious act can be viewed in no other light than as a libel upon the service in general, and upon all others who may have been attracted to the country, by a spirit of commercial enterprize, and if we submit to it *sub silentio*, our silence will doubtless be considered as an acquiescence in the justice of its aspersion. It therefore behoves us to exert every just and constitutional means to promote its repeal, and to vindicate our characters to the world from the unmerited obloquy to which it dooms them: for what will be the inevitable result of our patient acquiescence, but an implication of our culpability? Will not posterity consider, that in our criminality originated this wound to the constitution, and that our vices forged the first link of slavery's chain? Will they not devote us to deathless execration?

execration? Will they not consign us to never dying infamy? It is then that the irritated historian of these times shall glowingly record our baseness upon the unperishable page of history, and awaken the indignation of future generations against us! it is then that he shall imprint upon the tablet of their memory this painful tale—that, at such a period, there existed a race of British subjects in India, whose rapacity was so unbounded, whose cruelty was so unparalleled, and whose offences were so deeply enormous, that even the common law of the land, hitherto found adequate to the trial and punishment of a murderer, was deemed insufficient for the conviction of these more flagitious delinquents, and that, in order to bring their offences within the pail of punishment, it was necessary to violate *Magna Charta*, and to convulse that glorious fabric of British freedom which has long been the applauding theme of admiring ages! It is then that we shall be loaded with the bitterest curses of nations unborn in ages to come!

But what will be the consequence of governing these distant countries upon such narrow and oppressive principles? Many, loathing the ingratitude of their countrymen, will expatriate themselves for ever, and become attached to these climes; whilst others will emigrate into foreign countries, to live beneath the protection of milder laws. That is no country to me that does not cherish, foster, and protect me in all my native rights; in my honest fame—my liberty and fortune! Here the beautiful apostrophe of Mr. Addison in his epistle to Lord Halifax, rushes upon my mind with captivating force, and charms me to repeat it.

O Li-

O Liberty, thou goddess, heavenly bright !
 Profuse of blefs, and pregnant with delight,
 Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
 And smiling plenty leads thy wanton train.
 Eased of her load, subjection grows more light,
 And poverty looks chearful in thy sight ;
 Thou mak'st the gloomy face of nature gay,
 Giv'st beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day.

Independantly then of the tie of family connection, what is it that renders our native country peculiarly dear to us, but the blessing of living under a free government ? deprive us of that enjoyment, and there are few countries in Europe which do not offer superior comforts ; for if upon our return to Great Britain we become cultivators of the soil, one half of the produce of our estates will be swallowed up in a variety of taxes to support that pressure of national distress under which the state has been long sinking. But this is not the case in any other country to which we may retire. Therefore, unless the exceptionable parts of this act are repealed, England will inevitably sustain a considerable loss of subjects and of wealth, at a period when most she has occasion for the support of both to aid in reviving her faded honours, and to lighten the burden of her unwieldy debt. How much then does it become the wisdom and equity of administration to reflect soberly and dispassionately upon these circumstances, and by redressing our grievances, to guard against the probability of their happening ! Faction has too long usurped the reins of government ; but now, that in degrading her country her triumph has been complete, it is time that milder reason

reason should re-assume her gentle sway. Whither shall we fly to avoid oppression, in the event of the continuation of this new and odious power, can never be the question of a moment, for over the wide range of Europe see foreign liberality extended to shield us from these intemperate gusts of ministerial persecution ! there, unreviled by faction, and unexposed to the capricious frown of authority, we shall tranquilly enjoy our estates, and viewing at a distance the encreasing gales of national contention, we may calmly bid defiance to their turbulence and force !

It might, Gentlemen, have been expected that the institution of a tribunal, the nature of which is utterly subversive of every idea of civil liberty to those upon whom its despotic powers are meant to be exercised, subversive of the hereditary freedom and chartered rights of Englishmen, would, on the very first proposal of it in Parliament, have met with that determined and effectual opposition which so alarming a measure deserved; and that its authors, in wounding the constitution, would have been exposed to the resentment of an insulted nation. But the minds of men in England were prepared for the event; their feelings were irritated by the artful and captivating declamation of popular speakers, their pity was awakened by the fabulous recital of imaginary distress ! and their judgments were warped by the intemperance of public debate, which at that period generally diffused itself throughout the nation. Every base art to which malevolence could have recourse was adopted to calumniate and revile us; and it was during the tumultuous phrenzy which ensued
upon

upon the triumph of passion over reason, that the nation were deluded into a measure as injurious to our rights, as it is fatally dangerous to their own—a measure that in the cooler moment of returning reason must appear to them fraught with impending danger, and strikingly calculated to produce the downfall of the constitution. For the same arguments which have been used by the ministry in the present instance, will equally apply to every distant part of their dominions; and in this is established a precedent on which any daring and profligate administration may at some future period found the necessity of a similar mode of judicature for the detection of guilt, and the punishment of offences in the other dependencies of the empire; and thus will become confirmed a system of legislative despotism which will in a short time pierce the constitution to its vitals. The moment that such inquisitorial courts are tolerated, and their proceedings so generally admitted of by Britons; the instant that such tribunals shall thus become, and be regarded as a component part of the constitution, farewell to our boasted freedom! to that birth-right, and to those privileges which give us our proper rank in the scale of nations! the whole glorious fabric will at once disappear, and leave not a trace behind it, except the sad remembrance that British liberty had once existed.

And shall we be the first, who servilely bending to the yoke, who quietly acquiescing in the arbitrary dispensation of an ambitious minister, and an oppressive senate, being to overthrow the freedom of our native soil, and tamely wear the galling chain of despotism?

No!

No! I trust that the spirit which we have inherited from our ancestors will still continue to hold its influence in our minds, and that we shall be able to evince to our deluded countrymen, and to the world at large, that the relaxing influence of the climate has not so far debilitated our hearts, or weakened our understandings, as to induce us to permit any power on earth to encroach upon our rights as men, and as Englishmen, in passive silence; or that we are so lost to every sense of honour, to every regard for personal dignity, as to stand with patience before a tribunal where our characters are to be put to the rack—where dark informers, beckoned by the hand of power, with an interested malignity, and a perjury, heedless because secure, may at any time lay prostrate the honour of our lives, and strip us of the produce of our labours—and where we are to be dependant upon the mercy of a court whose jurisdiction stands counter to the ordinances of our ancestors, and whose judgement every other Englishman would feel himself impelled, by that inborn spirit of freedom which supercedes all law, to scorn and reject! Rather than degrade ourselves so low, we ought to relinquish our national attachment, and obliterate from our minds every early prepossession in favour of a country that has exposed us to such contumely! Tell me, Gentlemen, shall the people of England, blest with every advantage of climate, society of friends, the mutual interchange of family affection, trample thus wantonly upon those who, by the sacrifice of every fond tie, of every dear connection, have given an empire to the native country? who, with

often the loss of health, and at best, by a long and painful residence in a climate uncongenial to their constitutions, have accumulated a moderate competency as a shelter for the evening of their day, shall they, like felons, be dragged before such an inquisition? shall the winter of a life wasted in the service of their country, be unfeelingly rendered a season of joyless existence? No! perish the idea! vanish a thought so repugnant to the feelings of a British mind! Is this the descendant of the illustrious PITT? Is this the youth whom nature graced with ripened talents in the morn of life? Is this the asserter of his country's cause? Is this the guardian genius of her sacred rights? O! venerable shade of immortal CHATHAM! How would thy patriot bosom, warmed by freedom's flame, now glow with generous indignation, could'st thou but view thy favourite son, whom nature kindly destined to emulate thy virtue, and share thy deathless fame, thus tarnish the infancy of his career! Look down, bright spirit! and behold him seated on the eminence of that power, which once thy virtue radiated, now sporting with the happiness of millions, and stabbing the freedom of his country! Look down, divine emanation of unrivalled goodness! and, through the immensity of all created space, swift let that towering eagle eye of thine dart its indignant frown to recall him into glory's arms! swift let it flash to his recollection the curse that waits the man]

“ Who owes his greatness to his country's ruin.”

But, Gentlemen, the opinion at present entertained of us at home is such, that so far from our being considered

dered as entitled to a common participation in the constitutional rights of Britons, we are scarcely looked upon as deserving the name of men. Neither has the injurious light in which we are beheld originated in any casual prejudice or malicious bias against us in the hearts of our countrymen—it is the fatal result of a concerted plan, of a deliberate design.

A considerable time hath elapsed since many successive ministers of the crown, anxious to secure every mode of corruption which might place the will of the national senate at their command, have pursued every method that the wiles of political management could devise, to transfer the valuable and extensive patronage of the East into their own hands. But they were repeatedly baffled in all their attempts by that wise jealousy with which the nation at large have at all times watched and guarded against every new addition to their power. At length, however, they fell upon a method which appeared likely to answer their end, (among a people whose feelings are ever keenly awake to every idea of tyranny and oppression) and they hoped to strike with success at the Company through the reputations of their servants.

In pursuance to this virtuous design the most laboured representations were held forth of the enormities committed by those of every rank who were employed in the management of our newly acquired empire in the East. The needy adherents of a venal administration, anxious to participate in the wealth in India, filled the trumpet of calumny in every quarter. Inflamed by malice, and rankling with envy, they dispersed among

the credulous multitude, dreadful details of imaginary massacres, and dismal stories of ideal depredations committed by the British in the East, which had no existence in truth, but were solely the exuberant phantoms of their own disturbed imaginations. Nay even some of the most eloquent orators in the British Senate (whose abilities are obscured by the violence of their passions, and whose principles are tarnished by their zeal for persecution,) were not ashamed to give these improbable falsehoods their public sanction, and to disseminate them to the world in lofty rhapsodies of alternate misrepresentation and acrimonious invective. Their idle tales exceeded even the fiction of romance, or the authenticated cruelties which sober history relates to have disgraced the dark ages before civilization had improved the heart, or meliorated the human mind. No longer, Gentlemen, may we credit the recorded enormities which history pictures to our view, of the ceaseless massacres which marked the conquests of Fernandez Cortes in South America, and stained the character of his nation! No longer may we consider them but as the interested tales of malice, fabricated to obscure the fame of that conqueror, and tarnish the lustre of his actions, since in a more enlightened age similar cruelties are attributed to ourselves, and base assertions forged abroad to vilify the glory of a conquest as illustrious from its unprecedented brilliancy, as for the humanity which marked its completion! A conquest which evidently arose from the necessity of our own situation, in vindication of the national honour, and not from an ambitious avidity for dominion, or an uncontrollable desire for riches—

witness

witness to the truth of this, yon' dungeon still existing ! witness, this monument, * which yet records the barbarous deed which roused us to revenge ! witness, the unavailing sighs of those who are yet alive to mourn the massacre of their families, and to execrate the tyrant who gave them to despair !

These cruel arts, however ridiculous they may appear to us whose situation gives us an opportunity to know, to judge, and to feel, have been crowned with success to the fullest extent of their wishes. The gross and illiberal slander, which has been so profusely lavished upon us all, has been attended with such effects to the name and character of the service in general, that to have wasted the flower of life in India, to have encountered for a long series of years the rigours of an adverse climate, the pangs of illness, and the anxious solicitude of voluntary banishment, is now considered only as reflective of infamy and disgrace. In vain do we undergo all this ! In vain have examples been shewn by the Europeans of this country of extensive benevolence, of princely disinterestedness, to which no society of men on earth can produce superior proofs ! In vain ye intrepid defenders of your country's rights have ye smothered the rising flame of rebellion, or taught the haughty Maratta to dread the weight of British arms ! In vain ye gallant saviours of the CARNATIC have ye sustained toils and displayed exertions which would have done honour to the Roman name ! In vain ye unfortunate prisoners of a Russian despot have ye endured a painful

* Pointing to each of those objects near the Theatre.

captivity

captivity embittered by every suffering which inventive cruelty could frame ! Each laurelled soldier is involved in the general accusation, and asserted to be blackened by the crimes which are said to contaminate the whole ! How injurious and insulting ! Where, yes, where is the incentive to emulation ; where is the spring to valour, if you are to be thus traduced after the ceaseless perils you have so nobly braved ? hear me, ye veteran followers of lamented COOTE ! Let me appeal to that free spirit which dignifies the human mind, and to those quick feelings which are the inseparable ornaments of military breasts. If arms be your profession, is not honour your pursuit ? Surely ! danger is the soldier's joy, honour his mistress, and glory his delight. Will you not then recoil at this wanton attempt to taint its purity. Are you not tremblingly alive to every assault upon your fame ?

“ Who steals my purse, steals trash—’twas something,
 “ nothing—’twas mine—’tis his, and has been slave to thou-
 “ sands—but he who filches from my good name robs me of
 “ that which not enriches him but makes me poor indeed.”

SHAKS.

Say then—shall this oppressive act lay all your honours in the dust, and rob you of that wreath which fame has destined to reward your toils, and bids when dead still blossom o’er your tombs, and wake to memory the recollection of your virtues ! if this be the case, then prostrate your colours, at the shrine of despotism ; it is time you should muffle your drums, and beat the dead march over your expiring liberties ! In every society there are good and bad men ; for as virtue is the bright-
 est

est ornament of humanity, so vice is its darkest infirmity. But the latter are doubtless few, compared with the former. How cruel and unjust then that the depravity of a small number should stigmatize the remaining virtuous with unmerited ignominy, and that the supposed misconduct of one or two should involve a whole class of respectable people in the same indiscriminate mass of general delinquency ! such however is our case, for we are now, in a measure, proscribed by our country, and recorded infamous to the world. All Europe are taught to view us in the light of miscreants no longer deserving of national favour, unworthy of being governed by those laws which never had a partial distinction for their object, and unentitled to a participation in those constitutional rights which we have hitherto considered as a protective barrier for the whole ! But, Gentlemen, it was necessary, that those whose factious spirit kindled the flames of war; and whose mad ambition has torn an empire from their injured country, should endeavour to conceal her bleeding wrongs, and ward off her vengeance, by turning the torrent of national odium from themselves to make it fall upon the heads of those whose gallantry and spirit have preserved with stubborn firmness their remaining kingdoms in the East ! Little will it avail us to assert our innocence at present ; delusion must triumph for a while, as the great body of the people seem to have imbibed the prejudice of a faction against us—but there is a period, when its film shall be removed from the eyes of the public, and aspersions be subdued, by a full conviction of our wrongs—the virulence of contending parties will then subside, the mist of pre-

prepossession disperse of itself, and popular rancour yield to more generous and charitable sentiments. We shall then receive that justice we have a right to expect from a nation hitherto renowned for its liberality and wisdom, and the lie of the day will be consigned to its perishable existence. In the interim let us devote these insidious arts to the contempt they deserve and their authors to the reprobation they are destined to receive; for minds that are conscious of their own integrity will rise superior to the attacks of malevolence, and display themselves invulnerable by the shafts of calumny! "*Mens conscia sibi recti vim contumeliæ aspernat.*"

However much it may have been the fashion of the day to brand us with such opprobrious invective, and to represent us with *Bobadil* bombasticity, "as the destroyers of thirty millions of people by famine and the sword," yet I trust it will evidently appear that no conquest was ever effected wherein a greater attention was paid in the outset to the calls of humanity, or a more liberal regard observed on its subsequent completion to the rights of individuals. That the country has been impoverished in its resources since we became its possessors may probably be the case, but this is in some measure the common situation of all subjugated provinces, and was the anticipated consequence of our progress by the eye of wisdom. Was it not peculiarly the fate of the Roman acquisitions in Asia? Is not desolation unhappily, to a certain degree, the natural effect of conquest? Where is the conquered country that boasts of its increased advantages by reduction, or flourishes beneath the yoke of subjection? A mild and vigilant administration, the members of which are animated

mated to exertion by principles of patriotism, will, doubtless, strengthen and extend the happiness of the people, and the prosperity of the country over which it presides; but this is not the case in conquered dominions, where the same enthusiastic principle seldom influences the human mind: and hence it is, that a delegated government, far distant from the controlling power, must ever be exposed to a variety of disorders in its internal system, detrimental to the country it governs, as well from the unsteadiness of its principle as from the occasional misapplication of its powers. Those causes, therefore, which operated to impair the Company's possessions, existed morally in the nature of things, and would have been equally, if not more forcibly felt, if the sovereignty of those countries had devolved to any other European power; but even if they had owed their origin to an opposite source, it is not the less an act of injustice to make us the objects of punishment who were not the perpetrators of guilt—the truth however is, there is little reproach to be cast upon the conduct of individuals, for there is a tide in the affairs of human life, which neither the exertion of industry can repel, or the efforts of wisdom subdue.—Providence has wisely limited the bounds of earthly prosperity; and kingdoms, however flourishing, are destined to experience the transitory fate of every sublunary substance—nations, like the favourites of fortune, have each their day—the Romans had theirs, and we have seen ours. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* Rome sunk beneath the burden of her conquests, and the ancient mistress of the world exhibits, in her fall, a melancholy

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picture

picture of dethroned ambition, enslaved by bigotry, and subdued by arms. Britain, exalted by her heroes to the summit of imperial grandeur, already waves beneath the pressure of her glories, and displays, in the magnanimity of her efforts to uphold them, an immortalizing testimony of the brilliancy of her career.

It is now for America to rise into consequence, and branch into a boundless empire that possibly may level others, until by some singular revolution, or perhaps by the magnitude of her own conquests, she falls a victim to adversity herself, and some new triumphant and tyrannic power raises the fabric of despotism upon freedom's ruins.

I have now, Gentlemen, laid before you the fatal effects with which the power of this despotic authority—this new oriental court of star chamber, may be attended to your private interests—but the immediate and personal injuries to which you are subjected by it, are not the only considerations which should rouse your attention. To every man who possesses the smallest portion of public virtue, the welfare of his country will be of some concern; to every man who hopes within her parental arms to find a repose for the evening of life, her freedom will be dear! To preserve that welfare inviolate, and to guard that freedom from the baneful blast of tyranny, should be the exertion of every Briton, however distant from his native shore—I will therefore trespass upon your kind indulgence but a very little time longer, for the purpose of suggesting a few ideas on the subject of the Petitions which may probably be the result of this day's meeting, and which I now humbly
move

move a committee may be appointed to prepare. It is true we have been severely wronged, but we have yet the happiness to reflect that our complaints are not without a remedy. Under the pressure of accumulated injuries, an appeal still lies to a sovereign whose enlarged benevolence comprehends every portion of his wide extended empire—his Majesty is the father of his people, and in those royal virtues which so eminently adorn his throne we must confide for protection and redress—there is no support to which we can so pleasingly have recourse, and I am persuaded there is none in which we can repose so just a confidence. Let us therefore beware of intemperate zeal, and of measures dictated by too strong a sense of the injuries we suffer—What Englishman who now hears me but would blush for his country, if she were capable of basely yielding to his threats, that which she denied to his just representation? the calm, steady voice of reason will lull to silence the vain clamours of faction, and the rancorous hissing of envy; and unbar the avenues to returning justice! Let our conduct therefore be marked by temper and moderation. Let us owe to the equity of the state a redress which irascibility can never obtain; but which it will be the pride of a generous people to bestow upon our humble request.

I have ventured, Gentlemen, to step forth upon the present occasion under a conviction that the sentiments which I entertain, and have expressed, upon the important subject which has this day convened us, (as far relates to the principle and effect of this act) will be honoured with the approbation of most of my auditors.

I was sensible that a business of this kind only required to be introduced to your notice, and that a spirit of unanimous indignation would mark its infancy. This I have united in doing, with an ability inadequate to the task I have assumed, but with a zeal for your interests, and an attachment to the community, that admits of no superiority, and compensates for a deficiency of talents. I am sanguine in my hopes that the united solicitations of so respectable a colony will not be disregarded by the legislature at home—I am warm in my wishes that the neighbouring presidencies, equally injured with ourselves, will be animated by our resolves of this day to imitate our glorious example. It is my prayer—that those hopes may neither prove delusive, or these wishes remain ungratified! In the awful calamity which has recently befallen the empire, we have seen that the spirit of an Englishman is not of that ductile texture which readily yields to oppression, and that when the powers of despair are awakened, they are superior to danger, and tower above difficulty, I therefore firmly trust that a candid avowal of our feelings, in a respectful representation to Parliament, will meet with a favourable reception from the nation at large, and be productive of the happiest effect to ourselves, by restoring us again to the bosom of our country—No, Gentlemen, you will not assert your rights in vain! you will not long continue in a state of disgraceful separation from the rest of your countrymen! I feel the firmest assurance of success! I already anticipate the day of triumph, which shall assuredly succeed to this day of dejection! a day devoted to rapture, and

to the mutual heart-felt congratulations which shall mark the bright æra of our restoration to those rights we were destined to inherit—it is then that detraction will be immolated at the shrine of candour, and that it will cease to be a crime to have risen to an honourable independence! To complete the delightful picture of returning justice, good will, and benevolence, nothing is wanted, but that the same hand which has inflicted the wound, should, like the hero's spear of old, be stretched forth, to administer the remedy, and ensure the cure—Yes, the descendant of the illustrious CHATHAM, shall be among the foremost converts to truth, reason, and liberal sentiment! He is their hereditary votary—no man ever rose more honourably to power, or became more deservedly intrusted with the confidence of his countrymen. If his genius and his eloquence have excited their admiration the purity of his moral character has equally attracted the tribute of their esteem; and though fascinated for a while by the spells of faction, and deluded by the mists of prejudice, these will not long have power to detain his footsteps in the mazy paths of error—he will again become worthy of the great name he bears; again stand forth the terror, not the abettor of despotism; and having burst his own bonds asunder, he will fly with repentant feelings to unbind the ignominious fetters which in the hour of national delirium he inconsiderately forged for you. *O! die fortunate!* Let its pleasing expectation subdue every angry emotion, and rivet our affections to the state which protects us. And whilst it obliviously veils the past, let it chearfully glisten

sten upon our minds as a dawning ray of benignity to tinge the horizon of our hopes, and to inspirit us to look forward to that auspicious moment, when our grievances will be redressed by a liberal and enlightened nation—when persecution shall yield to justice—and faction be silenced by truth! Happy moment! It will be for ever dear to recollection! Gratitude shall fondly dwell upon its existence, our children shall venerate its birth, and posterity applaud the exertions which produced it! May we all live to see it! To bless that gracious monarch from whose bounty it is to flow! And to hail, with transport, the immortal day, which in restoring us to the rights of citizens and men, shall form an illustrious epoch in the history of our times, and be forever rendered memorable in the annals of our country.

T H E E N D.



